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CCI NO. 631

8 June 1954

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# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE DIGEST



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LATIN AMERICA

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31. Guatemalan Communists attempt to mobilize mass support for government: The Communist-controlled labor and peasant confederations in Guatemala began on 4 June to mobilize their followers for possible armed defense of the Arbenz administration.

Ambassador Peurifoy comments that this move may be designed primarily to demonstrate mass support for the administration, but that another motive may be to provide the government with an excuse for arming civilians.

He notes that the Communist and other pro-Arbenz forces are gaining the initiative in "Guatemala's war of nerves," and that the administration is "demonstrating it has the sinews for defense and intends to use them."

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Comment: Communist efforts to create a militant following sufficient to neutralize the army have been noted since last December. As the best-organized progovernment civilian groups, the Communist-led confederations would be the likely beneficiaries of any decision to arm civilians to defend the government in a crisis. President Arbenz has favored such a policy in the past.

The Communists are believed already in possession of some weapons, but not sufficient to provide defense of the administration against an army revolt at this time. Top military leaders are likely to resist providing civilian groups with additional arms which might weaken the army's position.

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## LATIN AMERICA

## 9. Required majority agrees to GAS meeting on Guatemala:

According to the American ambassadors in Uruguay and Bolivia, those countries now agree in principle to support a meeting of the Organization of American States on the Guatemalan problem but feel that the language of the resolution proposed by the United States on 5 June is "too hard."

Comment: This brings to 15 the number of governments committed in principle to a meeting. This is one more than the minimum required to make decisions under the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.

The objections to the language of the current proposal, however, underscore the continuing problem of gaining 14 commitments for specific action. Panama has also questioned the present text, and other objections are probable.

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**9. Guatemala may take diplomatic offensive:**

Guatemalan foreign minister Toriello reportedly said on 8 June that he intended to play a diplomatic "master card" by requesting that the United States and Guatemala attend an OAS meeting as litigants while the other members act as arbiters.

A despatch from the Costa Rican ambassador in Guatemala to his government reveals that Toriello had suggested that Costa Rica propose a somewhat similar meeting, but with only six or seven selected Latin American governments represented.

Meanwhile, an untested source reported on 8 June that the Guatemalans have "planted" caches of American arms and intend to announce their "discovery" within "two or three days" as "evidence" of American plotting to overthrow the Arbenz regime.

Comment: The projected Guatemalan proposal, if coupled with "evidence of aggression", by the United States or the United Fruit Company, could cause further delays in arrangements for the scheduled 1 July meeting of the OAS.

Several key countries, such as Chile, and possibly Argentina and Mexico, would have preferred the role of arbiters to that of active participant. Almost all of them are, however, at present committed to the view that the problem is international Communist intervention in Guatemala rather than any Guatemalan dispute with the United States.

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OCL NO. 6317

14 June 1954

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**U**nseres Lebens ist ein ewiger Kampf  
Füchse gegen einen wilden Löwen.

*Blackwood's Review*  
Given to Soldiers & Sailors Free  
Woolcott Library

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31. Guatemalan Communist emergency plans call for seizure of private plantations. The Communist-controlled labor and farm workers confederations in Guatemala have instructed their local branches to seize control of private farms in the event of an emergency, according to a source considered reliable by the American embassy. The workers have been instructed, on receipt of an emergency call from either confederation or from President Arbenz, to seize all vehicles and supplies on the plantations and to escort the owners or managers unharmed to the nearest authorities.

Comment: This report strengthens previous evidence that the Communists are preparing for vigorous action to counter any attack on them or on the Arbenz regime.

Communist-controlled local agrarian committees are strong in the rich agricultural area along the Pacific coast, particularly in the Department of Escuintla, where some have already assumed many of the functions of local government. Last December and January farm workers in this area were incited to invade numerous private properties in what the American embassy considered an effort to condition the workers to violent action under Communist leadership.

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